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CHARLES D. McIVER OF NORTH CAROLINA*

At Lake George, last summer, in the home of a dear common friend, looking out over a scene of peace and quiet beauty, Charles McIver and I were talking of life and its meaning and the flight of time that had carried us so swiftly past boyhood to middle life. Our moods alternated between the kind of boyish, unrestrained merriment, possible only to men who have grown up together, and a certain strain of premonition and sadness. I recall saying, "Charles, you will outlive me and you will probably have to write some resolutions or say something about me when I am gone. Make it short. Just say that we had a good time together, pounding away at real things." He answered quickly, "Ed. Alderman, though I look stronger than you, you may outlive me after all, and I will give you the same counsel." We were talking like children in the dark, as all of us poor mortals must talk, but I realize to-day how impossible it would be for me to speak in any form of stately eulogy of this strong and faithful friend, whom I knew so well and loved, and with whom I worked so intimately in the service of society. My very nearness to him, the elemental and vital character of his personality, make it most difficult for me to set down even this brief personal appreciation of him in formal sentences.

All of us who were close to him have the impulse to say simply, "Here was a great, strong, hopeful, buoyant, friendly soul, who loved his fellows and builded enduringly for their welfare, and should be forever honoured by them." Further words seem vain. Certainly I shall not seek to recount the details of his career to-day, nor to enumerate the positions he held or could have held; nor in any fashion, to use this memorial hour in a formal biography of him.

Charles Duncan McIver was born in a rural Scotch home, in the simplest part of the simplest democracy in America.

*Of all who knew the late Charles D. McIver, President Alderman was probably longest and most intimately associated with him. The spirit which animated the man and the worker seems best expressed in this address delivered on the occasion of the Memorial Exercises held at Greensboro, North Carolina, November 20, 1906.—EDITOR.

This Scotch home was full of cleanness and reverence and faith in the dignity of humanity and the power of knowledge, and all of its ideals were ideals of self-respect and manly ambition. In the existence of a multitude of such homes lies the antidote for the dangers of our over-nourished civilization and the safeguard of our republican ideals.

I saw him for the first time in the Autumn of 1878 at Chapel Hill (the University of North Carolina), whither he had preceded me by one year. There was no mistaking the quality of this great big country boy, eager, restless, purposeful, hopeful, with a face and an eye wherein humor and sympathy and shrewd discernment struggled for the mastery. He had already become a leader among his fellows. There was no better place, I think, for the making of leaders in the world, than Chapel Hill in the late seventies. The note of life was simple, rugged — almost primitive. Our young hearts, aflame with the impulses of youth, were quietly conscious of the vicissitudes and sufferings through which our fathers had just passed. "The Conquered Banner" and the mournful threnodies of Father Ryan were yielding place to songs of hope. A heroic tradition pervaded the place, while hope and struggle, rather than despair and repining, shone in the purpose of the resolute men who were rebuilding the famous old school.

All of us were poor boys. Those who came from the towns looked, perhaps, a trifle more modish to the inexperienced eye, but they were just as poor as their country fellows, and had come out of just such simple homes of self-denial and self-sacrifice. The unconscious discipline and tutelage of defeat and fortitude and self-restraint had cradled us all. We had all seen in the faces of our patient mothers and grim fathers something that we knew, if we could not express, was not despair, and somehow, life seemed very grand and duty easy and opportunity precious.

Reflect upon just a few of the names of the boys that were there then and perhaps you will agree with me: Aycock, McIver, the Winstons, Doughton, Strange, Peele, Phillips, Murphy, Daniels, Gattis, Noble, Joyner, Thomas, Pell, Battle, Dancy, Worth, McAllister, and many others high in industrial

and commercial life. Student ambitions in that day tended almost entirely to law, or politics, or scholarship. The great industrial awakening, which has since beckoned, and now beckons, to so many of our young men, to take a hand in transforming our civilization from an argicultural into an industrial democracy, had not begun to make its appeal.

After four happy years of steady growth in scholarship and character, McIver passed from the University to the school-room in 1881. I followed him into the school-room in 1882, and our intimacy as fellow-workers began in 1886, lasting unbroken and curiously interwoven until that quiet hour at Lake George, and in a deep spiritual sense, forever. He did his duty as an under-graduate, respecting his body and his spirit. He won Greek medals, but his thought was on men and student issues and college policies.

The story of his life from 1882 to 1906 is a clear, high story of human idealism and human achievement, which every boy in North Carolina should know and ponder, and which should cause the older men and women who listen to the strident voices of unrest and pessimism, to know that the heart of this Republic is true and sound, and that a heroic and noble simplicity lies at the root of our life. It is not an eventful story. It is not a story of thrilling vicissitude or startling change of circumstance. It is a story of earnestness and insight, of faith and purpose. His marriage to a noble woman, who sustained and strengthened him every day of his life; his clear sight of a great institution for the education of women in North Carolina; his brief and resistless battle for the attainment of that vision; a widening of that great conception into a passionate and whole-hearted dedication of himself to the education of all the people; the expansion of his nature under the spur of these high ideals; a splendid, joyous growth of his powers as they faced and overcame the difficulties that blocked his pathway; a serene and noble satisfaction in beholding his youthful dreams embodied here in forms of dignity and beauty and human training; the recognition of his worth, and the deep national value of his services by the whole republic, and a sort of unconscious apotheosis of him as the most useful citizen of his native State; the leader in all of its good causes.

Is there not essential grandeur in the unbroken unity of this upward-striving story?

There are some scenes in our common experiences between 1886 and 1890 that my heart recalls, and that I shall mention even at the risk of bringing myself into a picture, which I would fain fill with his own glory and his own worth. The original idea of the establishment of the State Normal and Industrial College in North Carolina was undoubtedly born in the brain of Charles McIver. He did not borrow the idea from Massachusetts or New York. The whole scheme forced itself upon him out of the dust of injustice and negligence right under his eyes. I recall the day at Black Mountain in 1886, when he spoke of it to me in his compelling way and won my quick sympathy and interest in the idea. His busy brain and unwearied energy rapidly drew friends to the movement, for no one who met him failed to hear of it. Together we drew up the first memorial to the Legislature in its behalf, and I remember the day in 1886 when he as Chairman, and George T. Winston, Edward P. Moses and myself presented this matter to the Committee on Education. We knew that it was doomed, but we came away elated and somewhat excited over our first contact with legislative responsibility and greatness. We might not have been so elated, if we could have foreseen how much contact we would have in the years to come, though, if he were here, I believe he would agree with me in saying that the contact did us good, and surely he gave back more than he received.

I recall Commencement Night at Chapel Hill in the year of 1889. We were to start out in a few days on a new and untried experiment in North Carolina or the South, a deliberate effort by unique campaign methods to create and mould public opinion on the question of popular education, involving taxation for the benefit of others. Men like Wiley and Murphy and Caldwell and Scarborough had fought this fight, but not just in this way. We were in the twenties and there were young wives and children at home, and the work we were undertaking was a temporary creation, due to the suggestion of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the good impulses of the Legislature,

which could not quite make up its mind to have done with us once and for all. There was no precedent for what we were trying to do, except Horace Mann, and he seemed so far off and so great that each one of us would have laughed at the other for mentioning the comparison. I remember that we talked about our plans and purposes and difficulties until the cocks began to crow. I told him to let me say one more word and then let us both go to sleep. He replied, in his hearty, wholesome way, that he did not propose to be put to sleep and let me have the last word at the same time. We then decided to make a night of it, and talked on until the sun arose. I am inclined to think it about the best night I have ever spent, for an intelligent and unselfish idea held our youth under its spell, and bound us for life to a service, which was not the service of self. As I think of it to-day, the grim old room in the Inn at Chapel Hill, and the silent watches of that night are lit with the light that never was on land or sea.

For three years in every county of this State, we sought to mould public sentiment and direct public opinion towards the development of an adequate system of popular education and toward the establishment of a school for the training of teachers. Some day I shall hope to tell in detail the story of this crusade, for such it was in spirit and purpose. It had its discouragements and its comedies and its mistakes, but it was a time of full-blooded enthusiasm, exaltation and faith in the people, and the experience taught McIver and it taught me the essential loveliness and justice and dignity of character and open-mindedness of the average North Carolinian in a way we could never have otherwise learned. And some good seed were sown, I think, which have increased some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. McIver was doubtful at first of his ability as a public speaker, but forgetting self in his purpose, he achieved in an amazing way, the very thing he did not think himself equal to, and quickly became the most effective speaker for public education that I have known in America. It was a dull and senseless audience that did not respond to his earnestness, the breathless onrush of his appeal, heated red hot in the glow of his personality, and lighted with a homely humour and power of illus-

tration and a shrewd adaption of story and anecdote, unequalled in North Carolina since young Zeb Vance won his triumphant way. His task was to plead with an individualistic and conservative community, hating overmuch, by reason of robbery and suffering, the very word "tax," for a democratic and communal institution costing large sums of money and a world of patience. His weapons were persuasion and charm and earnestness and humour and pleading and sympathy. They seem feeble weapons as compared to the money of the plutocrat or the force of the despot, but they found the heart of this just and reasonable democracy, and seemed to prove that the solution of our peculiar difficulties must come not by might or force but by the spirit of love, justice, humanity, and progress.

Many of his striking phrases will long live in the battles of educational growth: "The savage alone is exempt from taxation;" "The generations of men are but relays in civilization's march on its journey from savagery to the millennium;" "Education is simply civilization's effort to propagate and perpetuate its life and progress;" "The teacher is the seed-corn of civilization, and none but the best is good enough to use;" "Ideas are worth more than acres, and the possessor of ideas will always hold in financial bondage those whose chief possession is acres of land;" "It is plain, therefore, that the State and society, for the sake of their future educational interests, ought to decree that for every dollar spent by the government, State or Federal, and by philanthropist in the training of men, at least another dollar shall be invested in the work of educating womankind;" "If it were practicable, an educational qualification for matrimony would be worth more to our civilization than an educational qualification for suffrage;" "Finally, men began to seek education not that they might become leaders in the State and in the Church, but first of all, that they might be strong men; so that to-day seeing a man at college is no indication that he expects to be a preacher or a politician."

In company with Major Sidney M. Finger we wrote the law upon the statute books creating the institution, and selected the location for this building, and I should be false to justice and generosity, if I did not here pay tribute to the earnestness and

enthusiasm and faithful support given to us during these days by Sidney M. Finger.

An interesting characteristic of the inspiring career of Charles McIver was its large unity and freedom from complexity. In studying either the man or his work, one does not meet with subtleties or whimsicalities or irritating contradictions, but one beholds rather a large movement of beneficent purpose, struggling onward to perfectly clear ends, and a big hearty nature ever "greeting the unseen with a cheer." In a true sense, his earthly career began with his sight of this school, and it ended where it began, but behold the all-embracing character of such spacious single-mindedness! As a consequence of this stimulating vision, came increased interest for popular education; as a result of his philosophic grasp of the meaning of popular education to a democracy, came a whole great theory of civic service and community helpfulness, and common sense patriotism that tied him in closest sympathy to everything helpful, from hanging pictures on the walls of dreary country school-houses to large sentimental schemes of re-lighting the fires of love for the homeland in the hearts of those who had strayed away. A clear vision, therefore, and a clean consecration of himself in the generous ardor of youth, to the pursuits of that vision, wrought and moulded him into a kind of perfection as an American citizen, exhibiting all the moral persistence of the Puritan in a setting of sunshine and sympathy—

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.

The personality of Charles McIver interested and attracted men more than any sum of his attainments. His scholarship was not the scholarship of the schools, but rather a genius for sympathy with scholarship. Life was his thesis and men were his books and love his method. The Scotch passion for metaphysics had passed him by, leaving in its stead, a certain large understanding and a hearty insight that revealed any matter to him whole and entire. He gave the physical impression of

being in a hurry, but he was never in a hurry mentally. He was a wilful man in a good sense, and loved to have his own way, but I have known no man with fewer blind prejudices to obscure his vision. He was not the sort of a man who wanted everything, but the few fundamental things he sought, he kept a search light upon, and his hurrying figure could be seen moving toward them with resolute purpose. This freedom from hindering prejudices, and this single-mindedness, gave him a fine genius for co-operation and made him a beautiful man to work with, for you knew that his pride was not sticking out to get wounded, or his feelings to get hurt, or his toes to be trod upon. You were dealing with sanity and good-will that knew when to compromise, when to surrender and when to fight. Men called him a good politician and so he was, if you will let me define a good politician as one who knows how to compel men to do deeds of public service that they would not have otherwise thought of.

He was a royal good fighter, too, if you will let me define a fighter as a peaceful man who is clear as to his purpose, who will not be gainsaid, who will not be set aside, who will not be cajoled, and who will come to his point. Besides, he was a Scotchman and had to fight something, and ignorance was his natural foe. Men of strong character are sometimes good haters. McIver was a very poor hater. He could not hate men, and always exhibited a sort of pained surprise, unaccompanied with any ill-will of malignancy when men spitefully used him. He simply could not waste his moral strength in that most immoral of all passions, hatred. If I were to ask what was the greatest thing about Charles McIver, I should say that it was his interest and sympathy and love for men and women; not attractive men and women alone or good men and women, or great men and women, but men and women. To him had come perhaps dimly the feeling that in rights and opportunities the final manhood of earth will be "classless and tribeless and nationless." A crowd always interested him and stirred his powers no matter how weary he was, and he moved about the crowd with a vast human interest shin-

ing in his face. I have seen him stop and speak to a young boy, half-formed and immature, with an interest informing his countenance, like that which shines in the face of a collector, who has just found a new object for his collection. The story of the rise of men is full of men like Thomas Jefferson, who loved humanity, and were willing to die for it, but often they were shy of the units in the mass of men. McIver loved men and women, as he found them and they returned his love. The thing of deepest interest in the world to him was to see people rise. He was happy when they succeeded and sorry when they failed. Few men have worked through so busy a life, with so much sympathy and appreciation. He simply got what he gave.

Men who build or develop institutions, men who strengthen or preserve social forces of their times, do so through the exercise of faith and enthusiasm, and patience, and courage and energy, and these words might form a brief biography of Charles McIver. As our revolutionary age demanded the prophet of human freedom and the civil war period demanded steadfast courage, and the industrial period, the man of imagination and daring, so the decades between 1880 and 1906 in Southern history demanded men with faith in education as a great agency for moulding social and economic forces, and with power of personality and of brain to influence the most majestic of all human agencies—public opinion. Our institutions needed to be democratized; our thought to be nationalized; our life to be industrialized, and the whole process was one of education. The school was the heart of the South's problem and McIver saw that truth, and he will live forever in the history of this State as a great leader in this movement of transformation. It was besides his unique distinction to build outright a great institution. The State Normal and Industrial College, planted in the love and in the hearts of the people, will grow fairer in outward form, and richer in inward power, and as it grows the great traditions of his devotion will grow with it. In Emerson's fine phrase, this institution will be for all time the lengthened shadow of one man's life.

It is the purpose of those who love him to erect a statue to his

memory. In so doing they will honour themselves and teach objectively a great ethical lesson which should not be denied our youth; but this school is his real monument. An institution of learning is the best earthly type of immortality. It is the only thing under the heavens that grows younger and stronger with the years. It is a creature of deathless function, of endless needs, of immortal youth. Great grand-daughters will journey to it as to a pilgrimage, while young children will be playing about its knees, and the influence of all influences that will guide its life will be the influence of Charles Duncan McIver.

As for me, his death struck close at the foundations of my life. It was a thing my mind had never contemplated, for a certain unconquerable boyishness in him precluded the very thought of silence and the grave. I could not think of death in connection with this happy-starred, full-blooded man, in love with life and work. His passing closes for me a cycle in my life, a companionship of dreaming and work, of hope, and accomplishment, associated with the morning of life. Such work as he did must always go on, and I would fain be in it and of it, but his absence somehow gives to it a kind of loneliness and quite another hue and quality. After I left North Carolina, by a strange coincidence to which he often alluded, we drew closer to each other in actual intimacy than ever before. Benign fortune set us to doing over an area extending from the Gulf to the Potomac, what we had once tried to do over the hills and valleys of North Carolina. We met often each year, sleeping in the same rooms and talking in the night. I saved my stories for him, and he saved his for me, and his were always better than mine. He incarnated North Carolina to me, suggesting its wholesomeness, telling me its incidents, its ambitions, its progress, and bringing me news of our old friends — those that had died and those that had married and those that were fighting the battles of ambition and life. Each meeting with him was a bath of youth and good feeling and courage, which left me cleaner and stronger and fresher for my own tasks. I shall miss him sorely in this breathing world, though he is not dead either to my sight or spirit. Not only is he alive in the vague spiritual sense of the

choir invisible, moulding the ideals and purposes of men, but he is alive and vital somewhere upon some mount of faith, and busy at work upon some good cause.

O, strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely has not been left vain.
Somewhere surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm.

EDWIN A. ALDERMAN.

The University of Virginia.